

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of the present application is respectfully requested.

Claims 24, 25, and 28 have been amended to recite a level sensor for detecting the surface height of a molten metal in a hopper, and a control device for controlling the supply of the molten metal to the hopper based on a signal from the level sensor. New Claims 32-35 also recite these features. The claim amendments find support in the original specification at line 18 of page 20 through line 11 of page 21. Specifically, as described with reference to the non-limiting example Figure 4, a hopper 6 located at the upper end of the chamber 2 is provided with a level sensor 90 so that the molten material from the ground level supply unit 94 can be supplied to the hopper based on the signal level from the sensor. This has the advantage that only the necessary amount of the molten material must be placed at a high level, thereby ensuring greater safety. The height of the molten metal in the hopper must be controlled such that it does not damage the shaft seal of the extrusion screw in the chamber.

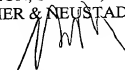
On the other hand, in Wang '266, the material is applied to the chamber in a molten state, but there is no description of how the material is melted. Further, the control of the surface height of the molten material in the hopper is not disclosed or suggested.

In Kono '372, the material is supplied to the hopper in a solid state and melted in the hopper itself. Therefore, the control of the surface height of a molten material in the hopper is not an issue in this reference.

Applicants therefore believe that the present application is in a condition for allowance and respectfully solicit an early Notice of Allowability.

Respectfully submitted,

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